

Sinclair Broadcasting's decision to force their stations to air an anti-Kerry documentary days before the election is a clear political and economic example of the dangers of media consolidation and the resulting absentee ownership and management.

Sinclair uses the public airwaves free of charge, and is obligated by law to serve the public interest. But when large companies control the airwaves, we get a skewed vision of the public interest, one that satisfies the agendas of remote owners and managers regardless of what local communities want and what we need for our democracy. Instead of local operators acting for and in response to the community and its needs, we have a Leninist directorate dictating what shall be broadcast. At a time when substantive news about issues that matter is critical, Sinclair offers a campaign commercial disguised as news.

Sinclair's actions show why we need to strengthen media ownership rules, not weaken them. They show why the license renewal process needs to involve direct participation by the citizens in the service areas claimed by broadcasters, rather than a mere returned postcard. Thank you.